

Readers Respond to the 8.5.18 Issue; The Thread

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Highlight: Here's what they had to say about the decade we almost stopped climate change.

Body

RE: LOSING EARTH

Nathaniel Rich wrote about the decade we almost stopped climate change.

Although we admire James Hansen and Rafe Pomerance's important work, focusing on only a few white, male climate advocates based in the United States during a particular time decades ago is simplistic. It's disrespectful to the thousands of others who have made this fight their life's work and implies that these men were our best, and last, shot at saving humanity.

We must acknowledge and join forces with indigenous leaders, communities of color, women and young people in the United States and throughout the world who have led the climate-justice movement for decades. To ignore this diverse coalition's extraordinary contributions is to also ignore the enormous victories they have achieved time and again against big polluters. These successes draw hope from our past and propel us in our present to help write a more just, viable future. Patti Lynn, executive director of Corporate Accountability; Lidy Nacpil, coordinator of Asian Peoples' Movement on Debt and Development in the Philippines; and May Boeve, executive director of 350

Long before everyone was talking about climate change, Rafe Pomerance and Friends of the Earth were on the front lines, holding fossil-fuel corporations to account and pushing politicians to act. And we've been doing it ever since. The hostility we faced then has only increased. Decades of corporate and political lies about climate change have weakened policies intended to protect people and the planet.

For years, Republicans have obstructed progress on this issue, and Democrats — even those who acknowledged the problem long ago — have failed to lead with bold action for fear of political retribution. To solve this crisis, we must dismantle the political and corporate systems that destroy our planet. We must halt the extraction and burning of fossil fuels and transition to renewable energy that prioritizes the most affected communities.

The power to achieve these goals lies with people. Only a mass movement of people, built from the ground up, can take on the corporations and politicians who endanger people and the planet for profit. This is how we win. Erich Pica, president of Friends of the Earth

After working my entire adult life on some aspect of climate change as an academic, a government official and then an activist, it became evident that corporate greed and politics trumped science, as tragically shown in this story.

Now I place my hope in the faith community to transcend politics and tackle this issue as a moral imperative. All religions contain sacred scriptures that call on their faithful to care for creation. This was evident at the 2016 People's Climate March in Washington as Franciscans, Muslims, Buddhists and Jews walked together in solidarity. A culture of conservation is developing, and the faith community is stepping up to fill the leadership void left by

government officials unwilling to act on climate change. Susan Varlamoff, board member of Georgia Interfaith Power and Light

This article made me realize I missed the warning signs. When I took J.W. Chamberlain's Planetary Atmospheres graduate course in the early '80s, he never mentioned the perils of global warming to us, even though he was the Jason member responsible for the Gray Homogeneous Model in the 1979 report to the Department of Energy mentioned in Rich's article.

In the late '80s at NASA, we had just started validating hypersonic-gas-flow codes with wind-tunnel experiments as part of an initiative to design spaceflight vehicles from computer models. Management didn't believe the predictions, and neither did the modelers. In contrast to aerodynamic models, climate models were far more complicated, were subject to larger modeling uncertainties and were not reliably tested. Hence, I viewed climatology-model predictions with suspicion, believing that their apocalyptic claims were a funding ploy. For all the right reasons, I got it wrong. John McGary, Ph.D. in space physics

Illustrations by Giacomo Gambineri

PHOTO: The Story, on Instagram | So powerful and incredibly devastating. — @onedaysoon (PHOTOGRAPH BY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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